



U.S. Department of Justice

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For Immediate Release:

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EVENT: Sentencing

Defendant: Jonathan M. Hilts

**DEARBORN MAN SENTENCED FOR CHILD PORNOGRAPHY
DISTRIBUTION AND POSSESSION**

A Dearborn man was sentenced today to 96 months in federal prison in United States District Court for distribution and possession of child pornography, according to United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy.

Receiving the 8-year prison sentence was Jonathan M. Hilts, 52 of Dearborn, Michigan, a disbarred attorney. The sentence, which included five years of supervised release, was imposed by Honorable Marianne O. Battani, United States District Judge, on convictions for (1) one count child pornography distribution, in violation of 18 United States Code section 2252A(a)(1) and (2) one count of child pornography possession, in violation of 18 United States Code section 2252A(a)(5). Hilts pleaded guilty to the offenses in June of 2006.

United States Attorney Murphy said, "Those who trade in images that depict children being sexually assaulted and abused truly deserve the kind of serious penalty the Court appropriately imposed today. They create a market for such horrendous exploitation of children. Our office will continue to pursue those who seek to expand the market for on-line child pornography and seek such appropriate sentences."

The prosecution arose from the investigation called Operation "Crying Eyes" which was initiated by the Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement Division (DHS ICE), in Fresno, California. The investigation identified Hilts, a former Michigan attorney, as a target in connection with a nationwide child pornography distribution case. DHS-ICE Detroit then pursued the Michigan investigation.

According to the information presented in court, in September and October of 2004, Hilts, sent and received numerous child pornographic images via computer through an AOL account. A search warrant executed at Hilts' home disclosed that Hilts had numerous trading partners and a child pornography collection of over 1000 child pornographic movies and images containing graphic depictions of actual teen and pre-teen children engaged in explicit sexual conduct.

Murphy commended the work of the Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement Division. This case was handled by Assistant United States Attorney John O'Brien.